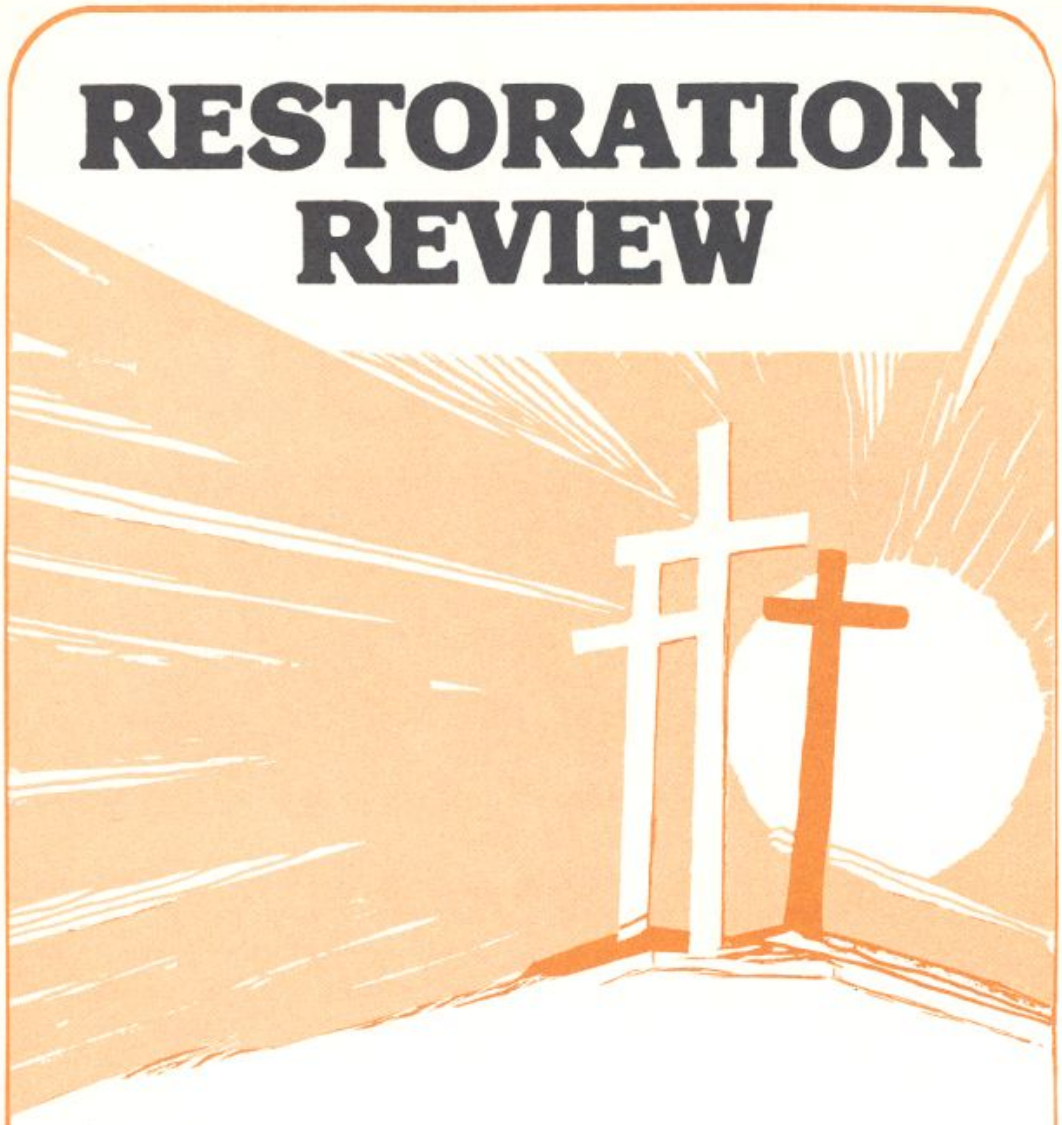
RESTORATION REVIEW



The fundamental crisis of the church today is a crisis of the Word of God. The church must recover the full dynamic of the Word, not just as Scripture, but as God-in-communication, especially through the written Word of Scripture and supremely through the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. This is another way of saying the church must recover a consciousness of who God is.

—Howard A. Snyder in *Liberating the Church*

Vol. 25, No. 2 Leroy Garrett, Editor February 1983

Volume 25, No. 2 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **February 1983**

The Doe of the Dawn: A Christian World View. . .No. 2

ONLY A CREATOR GOD MAKES SENSE OF THINGS

A child looks into the heavens through a powerful telescope and is moved with delight over the magnificence of the star-spangled sky. Endowed with childlike faith, he is not threatened by the imponderables. He has an answer, if he needs one, for the God his mother tells him of is behind it all. God hung the stars, he explains, so he moves along in a world that makes sense, even when it is inexplicable. In his simple way he accepts the universe as a gift to be enjoyed, and he doesn't have to be bothered with too many answers.

An agnostic scientist looks through the same telescope at the same universe and is challenged to take control. He must explain what he sees, even if his answers are hypothetical. But he must not only explain what he sees, but manipulate it as well. He thinks only in naturalistic or scientific terms, never in transcendental or supernatural terms. The only "faith" he considers is whatever faith he may have in his methods. Unlike the child, he is not awed, only challenged. There is no God, no creator, in the drama, and so it makes no sense. But this he can never admit, for then he loses control. He must make sense of it, if not in one way then in another, and so he turns to what he calls *science.*

Scientific man, as contrasted to the man of faith (a scientist can of course be a man of faith), presumes sovereignty over nature, and so he becomes a creator of sorts, projecting upon the world the image he has of the world. Like the playwright that plots the story the way he wants it to go, the scientific man creates a world that he can explain. He has a manageable world in that it reflects the kind of world he sees it to be. But no such world exists, for there are yawning gaps between the world that he experiences and the world that lies beyond his experience. He seeks security for his future by manipulating the world, through such techniques as nuclear physics and bioengineering, only to be threatened with destruction by his own creations.

He presumes that the world was made for man rather than that man was made for the world. Man tries to force the universe to conform to his behavior, whether in the recesses of outer space or the vast domain of human genes, rather than conforming his behavior to that of the universe. Instead of allowing the heavens to declare the glory of a creator God, man uses the heavens to declare his own presumed glory.

This is the essence of secularistic humanism, which views man and the world strictly in naturalistic terms. It says that life is to be lived as if there is no God. Insofar as solving problems is concerned the idea of God is irrelevant. A secular humanist may not bother to *deny* the existence of God; he simply finds no place for God in his view of things. It is a kind of "beyond God" philosophy. It isn't that God gets in the way. He is simply ignored as being beside the point. Consequently life holds no ultimate meaning. Life and death may be explained in terms of modern science and even dealt with in humanitarian ways, but they remain void of any real meaning. If man has no creator, he has no hope. This is why secularism, which is to live as if there is no God, begins and ends in futility. If our future lies only in our own power, through science and technology, we have no basis for hope. And life without hope means despair.

This was the philosophy the apostle Paul encountered in Athens with the Stoics and Epicureans. They were the secular humanists of their age, and while there were ennobling qualities to their thought, they saw man and the universe as transitory. The Epicureans insisted that whatever happens is but the whim of nature and that death ends everything. Pleasure should therefore be man's chief end. Like the humanists of today, they believed that if there are any gods they are completely irrelevant to our kind of world. The Stoics were fatalists, basing their philosophy on the premise that life is determined by forces beyond man's control. Man's only response is to yield to those forces and not allow himself to become emotionally involved. While they spoke of God, he was but the spirit in the blind forces that have no discernible meaning. Everything ends in a grand conflagration, only to begin the mad process again.

This was the secularism of the most cultured nation on earth in Paul's day, with the Epicureans naming pleasure, especially *intellectual* pleasure as the point of life, and the Stoics stressing apathy, an indifference even toward the tenderest of life's experiences. Pleasure and apathy continue to be the main ingredients of secularism, a way of life that ignores any notion of God.

It is noteworthy that to such ones Paul spoke movingly of a creator God, "the God who made the world and everything in it." The Greeks could tolerate the idea of God, even the notion that "In him we live and move and have our being," as their philosophers had taught, of which the apostle reminds them, but not of a *creator* God who is "Lord of heaven and earth," as Paul described him. It is only a creator God that can lay claim to Lordship over the universe and over every created thing.

Humanism has always been subtle in its disbelief. It often employs religious language, allowing for a "God" who is some sort of spiritual essence that may be equated with nature, and so we have pantheism, which makes everything "God," including man. Or it

may be called naturalism, which makes deity of Nature. It may even find place for a creator God so long as the deity removes himself from active duty and has no more to do with his creation once he has put it in motion, and so we have deism. It is all humanistic in that there is really nothing greater than man and nature insofar as the issues of life are concerned. If man is to be saved he must save. himself. Things like bioengineering, which may eventually attempt to control one's existence from conception to the grave, are man's only hope for meaning in this world. Not only behavior but character itself may one day be predetermined by genetic manipulation!

The idea of a God who created the universe *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, and who is consequently Lord over nature and history and thus relevant to the very air man breathes is offensive to our secularistic age. As believers we look to a God who is both transcendent and immanent. While he created nature he is beyond it and distinct from it, thus transcendent. And yet he is *in* nature and *in* the world, being the arbiter of history and the guardian of all creation, and thus immanent.

All forms of atheism deny either the transcendence of God, as in pantheism, or the immanence of God, as in deism, or both, as in radical agnosticism. The true theist affirms both the God of creation and the God of history, the God who hears prayers and continues to work in our lives.

This is the God that Paul declared to the Athenians, who saw him as a mere babbler or a preacher of foreign divinities. The God who created the universe, Paul reasoned, cannot be housed in shrines built by man, for he gives to man life and breath. He not only created man but presides over the nations of men, "having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation." Whatever God is like, the apostle insists, he cannot be represented by the artifacts of man, whether in gold, silver, or stone. Even more important, this God has revealed himself, commanding all men to repent, "because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man who he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

The belief that God created all things out of nothing gradually emerged in Biblical thought. While the very first verse of the Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth, there is reason to suppose that this refers to an ordering of the universe out of chaos or out of already existing matter. Even the Greeks could accept this in that they believed in the eternity of matter and that matter is constantly changing. They even believed there was a Logos at work in the "constant state of flux," which explained the order of things.

While God is referred to as "maker of heaven and earth" as early as Gen. 14:19, it is centuries later before the prophets emphasize the doctrine of a creator God as part of their portrayal of a redemptive God. Until then the Hebrews were content to think of their God

as one who was mindful of them as a people and who acted in history in their behalf. It was when the people were finally separated from their homeland and in exile among foreigners that a prophet arose who gave new meaning to belief in a creator God.

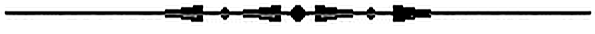
The one commonly referred to as “Second” Isaiah (chapters 40-55) taught his people who were crushed by the events of history that it is the creator God who is the God of history. It is a redemptive doctrine, one needed as much in our troubled world as in the days of ancient Israel. “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth,” the prophet told them. He went on to assure them that if they would “wait for the Lord” that the creator God would bear them on eagles’ wings back to their homeland (40:28-31). The prophet was persuaded that “men may see and know,” that they can make sense of things, when they realize that the God of Israel is the creator of all things (41:20).

Psa. 89:11 also gives us a basic principle for the living of these days: “The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine; the world and all that is in it, thou has founded them.” The principle of a creator God answers so many of our problems. Whatever doctrine we may have of evolution, what really matters is that the living, creator God is behind it all. This is the great truth that is to pervade every classroom. Whether it is the anatomist looking at the human body, the astronomer looking at the stars, the botanist looking at the plants, or the geneticist looking into the vast universe of the gene, this grand truth must serve as arbiter: *Thou has founded them.*

To deny the creator God places man in an impossible, hopeless position. He must conclude that order evolved out of chaos *with no reason.* His own mind, indeed all of life, just somehow happened to be. And he must accept the absurdity that intelligence came from non-intelligence. And his mission and destiny are in a universe of blind forces? His mission is meaningless and his destiny hopeless.

But if the creator God is his heavenly Father and has revealed his will for the living of these days, then he is heir to one of the greatest truths ever penned: *If God* is *for us, who can be against us?*

God made me and he is *for* me! It must be the heart of our world view. --- *the Editor*



Belief in and dependence on God is absolutely essential. It will be an integral part of our public life as long as I am Governor. - *Ronald Reagan*

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THE BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PREMILLENNIALISM

Robert Shank

As a premillenarian, I stand within the tradition of the Restoration movement. Great men of name and fame in the movement have held pre-millennial persuasions. Consider the following.

Alexander Campbell: "The angel of this everlasting gospel [Rev. 14:6,7] announces the good news that. . .the Lord is about to recompense his enemies and to commence his reign over all the kingdoms of the world. . .No kingdom of this world has yet become a kingdom of Jesus Christ. . .Till Jesus appears in the clouds of heaven, his cause and people can never gain the ascendancy. Now is the time for suffering with him, that with him we may reign. . .Christ appears as a harbinger of the millennium." --- *Millennial Harbinger,* 1833, p. 119.

It is "strange how anyone well read in sacred learning could imagine that Satan has been bound for the last thousand years, and that we have had a reign of Christ for a thousand years." --- *Mil. Har.*, 1843, p. 231.

"God has not kept [the Jews] these many ages for nothing. He will use them again, and yet again bless all the nations of the earth by the seed of Abraham, his friend. 'If the casting of them away has been the reconciling of the Gentile world, what shall the resumption of them be but life from the dead?' We hear a rattling in the valley of dry bones. The Jews are intent on re-building their city and their temple, and in returning to their own land." --- *Mil. Har.*, 1849, p. 87.

"[The Jews today are still] a monumental people. . .in their present position the subject of special prophecy and of special promise. . . . What is yet future or unfulfilled in their history will as certainly be accomplished as that their Messiah came at the appointed time. . . . [Has. 3:4, 5] is only fully verified in their present [circumstance] and prospective future destiny." --- *Mil. Har.*, 1856, p. 275.

"Jerusalem's fall is already written, and her future rise and glory occupy a large space in the visions of the future. . . Our Lord, by Luke, speaks still more plainly: 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles till the times of the

Gentiles be fulfilled.' This is our index to the prophecies concerning the Jewish reign. 'The times of the Gentiles' yet continue. . . .[But there yet] will come the fulness of the Jews. 'For the Redeemer shall come out of Zion,' the city of David, 'and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob'. . . . With Paul, we rejoice in the prophetic drama, and therefore anticipate a glorious triumph of grace in the redemption of ancient Israel according to the flesh." --- *Popular Lectures and Address*, pp. 525-527.

Barton W. Stone: "At the very commencement of [the Millennium] the King of Kings comes in his glory and smites all the wicked nations of the earth. . . . At the same time the old Serpent, the Devil or Satan, is bound for a thousand years." --- *Christian Messenger,* 1833, p. 314.

"The second coming of Christ is at the commencement of his millennial reign on earth. Here on earth he will reign till the 1,000 years be finished." --- *Christian Messenger*, 1833, p. 365.

"Now according to prophecy, according to the promise of the Lord Almighty, and the unconquerable expectation of the Jews, Jerusalem by the sons of Abraham is to be again 'safely inhabited.' See Zech. 14." --- *Christian Messenger,* 1835, p. 31.

Walter Scott: ". . . the time will come when the saints, as Daniel says, 'shall possess the government' and all power, authority and rule be recovered to God by His Son and His saints." --- Pioneer Sermons and Addresses, p. 178.

"After dinner brother Walter Scott delivered a very interesting discourse on 'the great and notable day of the Lord,' which is to introduce the Millennium." --- A. Campbell, *Mil. Har.,* p. 300.

Moses E. Lard: "The world will then be ripe for the coming of Christ, and at his coming the holy dead will be raised, the righteous living will be changed, and the millennium will have set in." --- *Commentary on Romans*, p. 374.

"The millennium will commence in the precise instant in which Satan is bound and locked up in prison . . . for a thousand years. . . . At that moment the millennium will be inaugurated. From that time it will stretch forward and include, in our opinion, a period of a thousand years precisely. . . Of the events which are further to characterize its commencement we shall now speak more particularly.

"1. All the living saints will be changed . . . . 2. The sleeping saints will be raised . . . . 3. The actual persona! and literal reappearance of the Saviour. . . . Christ will literally come in person at the commencement of the millennium, and literally remain here on earth during the entire thousand years." --- *Lard's Quarterly,* Vol. II, pp. I ff.

Tolbert Fanning: "Our reading has led us to the conclusion that [the Church] is at war with the powers of earth; that the subjects of Christ's kingdom will really subjugate, overcome and put down by the Gospel of peace all of Satan's subjects that can be saved; and afterwards the Lord will reign with his people a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years Satan is to be loosed for a little season, just long enough to collect his forces around the Saints, when the Lord will send fire to destroy the King's enemies, the judgment will take place, the righteous will be saved, the wicked damned, and God's government will be approved." --- "The Coming of the Lord," *Gospel Advocate,* Sept., 1866.

T. W. Brents, comment on Rev. 20:4: "This is the millennium. If this does not express a literal reign with Christ for a literal thousand years, we know not what assemblage of words would be capable of expressing that thought." --- "The Millennium," *Gospel Sermons, 1891*.

David Lipscomb, comment on Acts 3:20, **21:** "Jesus had been to earth and returned to heaven. Heaven must receive him until 'the times of restoration of all things.' Then 'the times of restoration of all thing' must be when Jesus returns again to earth. . . . When Jesus comes again, the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and all things in the world will be restored to harmonious relations with God." --- *Queries and Answers,* p.360.

"I do not say that fleshly Israel will be again literally restored to the land of Palestine. Yet it may be so." --- *Gospel Advocate,* quoted by J. W. Shepherd.

E. G. Sewell: "But there will be such a reign [of Christ on earth], and it will be glorious to them that shall be in it. . . . It is also clear that this 1,000 years' reign will be before the final end of this world. . . . After the 1,000 years' reign and of the bound state of Satan, he is to be loosed for a little time, and is to go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." --- *Gospel Advocate,* April 12, 1900.

Robert Milligan, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 1875, comment on Heb. 2:5: "The world to come means. . .the habitable world under the reign and government of Messiah. . .the world in which we now live, and in which, when it shall have been purified from sin, the redeemed will live forever."

Ibid., comment on Heb. 2:8: ". . .mankind will yet regain their lost dominion over the Earth. How far this will be accomplished before the Earth shall have been renovated by fire (2 Pet. 3) it may be difficult to say. When Satan shall be bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6) and the saints of the Most High possess the Kingdom (Dan. 7:14, 18, 22), the prophecy of Isaiah (11:6-9) may be more literally fulfilled than we now anticipate. But whatever may be true of this blissful era, so long and so often foretold by the Apostles and Prophets, it is not at all probable that man's dominion over the world will be fully restored until the new heavens and the new earth appear, in which righteousness will forever dwell (Rev. 21)."

"Palestine will certainly be again restored to the dispersed Israelites for an everlasting possession." -*Mil. Har.,* 1856, p. 569.

J. W. McGarvey, article "Why Are the Jews Yet With Us?" in *Christian Standard,* 1903, comments on Jer. 30:10, 11; 31:35, 36; 16:14-16: "These utterances were and are a guarantee that so long as the sun and moon, the stars, and the sea endure, no matter what the fate of other nations, 'the Jews shall yet be with us'. . . . But Israel is not destined to merely exist to the end of time. They are to be gathered in the land God gave them as an everlasting possession. . . . This has never yet been done; for the small remnant who returned under the decree of Cyrus and Artaxerxes were but a handful of the generation then living, and there has been no general migration of Israel back to Canaan. Isaiah, in terms and style of his own, makes the same prediction" (McGarvey cites Isa. 11:1-13).

Ibid., comment on Amos 9:11-15: "This refers undoubtedly to the reign of Christ, in which the throne of David is restored. . . . All this is yet in the future, and it is to occur under the reign of the risen and glorified Son of David."

James A. Harding: "During this time, this thousand years, Christ and his saints reign; but the rest of the dead live not again till the thousand years have expired. This, the resurrection of the righteous, is the first resurrection; over those. .. 'the second death has no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. . . .' During this period

> Satan will be in the abyss, chained, closed up and sealed over. . . . That this millennial reign will be on the earth is clearly indicated by the fact that at the beginning of it Christ and His saints are on the earth, and so they are at the end of it." - *The Way,* Oct. 15, 1903.

As premillenarians, the above men of renown in the Restoration movement (and others who could be cited) were entirely and precisely within the pale of the faith of the apostolic church. In my book *Until: The Coming of Messiah and His Kingdom* (Appendix F: The Church and Premillennialism, 41 pages) I have cited 21 eminent church historians (many of them amillenarians or postmillenarians, but candid and objective as historians) who affirm that premillennialism was the faith of the apostolic church and remained predominant among the churches until after the death of Augustine (A.D. 430).

In his monograph "Premillennialism" in the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* (1891) Samuel H. Kellogg writes, "It is commonly agreed by the best modern historians that, from the death of the apostles till the time of Origin, premillennialism was the general faith of those who were regarded as strictly orthodox Christians." Sheldon writes in his *Church History* (Vol. I, p. 145) that "premillenarianism was the doctrine of the Christians in the first and second centuries. The fathers expected anti-Christ to arise and reign and meet his overthrow at the personal coming of the Lord, after which the Kingdom of Christ for a thousand years would be established on the earth." Giesler says in his *Church History* (Vol. I, p. 166) that "Millenarianism was the general belief of the time and met with almost no other opposition than that given by the Gnostics." Munscher writes, "How widely the doctrine of millenarianism prevailed in the first centuries of Christianity appears from this, that it was universally received by almost all teachers, and even some heretics agree with them" *(History of Christian Doctrine,* Vol. II, p. 415).

In his *History of Doctrine*, p. 231, Crippen writes that the early Fathers "distinguish between a first resurrection of the saints and a second or general resurrection . . . separated by a thousand years, during which Christ should reign over the saints in Jerusalem." In his *History of the Christian Church* (Vol. II, p. 614) Schaff writes that "the most striking point in the eschatology of the ante Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years before the general resurrection and judgment." In his monograph "Millennium" (*Encyl. Brit.*, 1894) Harnack writes that "faith in the nearness of Christ's second advent and the establishing of His reign of glory on the earth. . .was a prominent feature in the earliest proclamation of the gospel and materially contributed to its success. . . . These enthusiastic expectations were inseparably bound up with the Christian faith down to the middle of the 2nd century. . . . The fact that men clung to them is the clearest evidence that in the West millenarianism was still a point of orthodoxy in the 4th century."

In his *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History* (Vol. I, p. 89) Mosheim writes concerning the attack against premillennialism by Origen in the third century that "before this period an opinion had prevailed that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men before the entire and final dissolution of this world. This opinion. . .had hitherto met with no opposition." In his *Discourse on the Millennium,* p. 236, Bp. Russell writes that with respect to the faith of the early church, "in reference to the sure and certain hope entertained by the Christian world that the Redeemer would appear on earth and exercise authority during a thousand years, there is ground for the assertion of Mede, Dodwell, Burnet and other writers that down to the beginning of the fourth century the belief was virtually universal and undisputed."

The unanimous consensus of eminent church historians concerning the virtual universality of premillennialism in the churches of Christ in the first three centuries is impressive and conclusive. (For a survey of the transition from apostolic premillenialism to Augustinian amillennialism in the first five centuries, with documentation from historical sources, see *Until,* Appendix F: The Church and Premillennialism, pp. 477-517.) The premillennial understandings of many great men of renown in the Restoration movement are precisely within the framework of the faith of the churches of Christ of the apostolic and early generations. I believe that my book *Until* demonstrates that their understandings are consonant with the total prophetic and eschatological disclosure of the Bible. In the remaining pages of this monograph, I can offer only a few facets of the vast biblical foundation of premillennialism.

ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

It is sometimes asserted that premillennialism posits that the church was not in the original plan of God and was instituted only as an "emergency" measure because of Israel's rejection of the Messiah in his first advent. If there have been premillenarians who so asserted, they were mistaken. Such assertion is not intrinsic in premillennialism.

The church was in the plan and redemptive purpose of God from the beginning, though it remained a "mystery" until full disclosure through the apostles, by the Spirit (Eph. 3:1-11). The church, inaugurated at Pentecost, is the spiritual body of Christ on earth (Eph. 1:22, 23, Col. 1:18, 24, 1 Cor. 12:27). It is the kingdom of Christ in the world today (Col. 1:13, Heb. 12:28, Rev. 1:9). But it is a proleptic kingdom, anticipating the coming of the Messianic kingdom, when the church will reign with Christ over the nations (Rev. 2:25-29; 5:10, 2 Tim. 2:11, 12). Let none disparage the church, eternal in the counsel and plan of God, for his eternal glory (Eph. 3:21).

Does the church appear in the OT? It does indeed, in symbol and type, analogy and implication. . .and more: the first categorical prophecy of the church appears in the great prophetic Ode of Moses (though the church remained a "mystery" until it was fully delineated by the apostles).

Any who say that the church was not in the eternal plan of God are totally mistaken. So, too, are those who say that the prophecies of the restoration of Israel as a nation and as the Davidic Kingdom under the reign of Messiah are not to be fulfilled literally, but only spiritually in the triumph of the church.

Jesus, say some, now reigns over the nations through his churches, and the "restoration of Israel" is fulfilled in the church, which has forever replaced Israel as the true "Israel" and people of God. Those who say such things have failed to observe that in the context of the first categorical prophecy of the church as a spiritual body and people of God (Deut. 32:21), Israel's perpetual identity as a people of God and chosen nation is affirmed, whose end and destiny is not oblivion, but blessing and glory when, after a period of estrangement, God "will be merciful to his land and his people," for which cause the nations at last "will rejoice with his people" Israel (Deut. 32:43).

In the great Prophetic Ode of Moses (Deut. 32) two peoples are in view --- Israel, and another people (a "not a people" people). God declares that because Israel "stirred me to jealousy with what is no god [and] provoked me with their idols, so will I stir them to jealousy with those who are no people, I will provoke them with a foolish nation" (v. 21). Because of their unfaithfulness, Israel was to be scattered among the nations and severely chastised, but the design of the chastisement was not the annihilation of Israel as a people, but rather discipline, recovery, and national restoration (cf. Deut. 4:26-31, Lev. 26, Deut. 30:1-6). A people who were as yet "not a people" (the church) would become the catalyst by which Israel, seeing their enjoyment of the favor and blessing of God as also his people, at last would be provoked to jealously and be moved to seek the mercy of God in a great renewal of penitence and faith.

Fifteen centuries after Moses, Peter wrote to the faithful of the church, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people. . . . Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet. 2:9, 10). As foretold in Moses' prophecy, the church is now "a holy nation, God's own people" (cf. Rom. 10:19).

Let the church rejoice in her privilege as "God's people." Let her rejoice in the many legitimate spiritual applications of OT prophecies to herself. But let her understand that spiritual application of prophecies to the church in no way obviates their literal fulfillment in the experience of Israel. There are two peoples in view in the Prophetic Ode of Moses,

and the prior people is Israel, in view in the ode from the beginning to the end, which foretells the time when God "will avenge the blood of his servants and render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land and to his people" (v. 43). Israel's prophetic prospect is here identified with the *land* of Israel, as throughout the Scriptures. Israel is to be a kingdom again, a nation-kingdom far more overtly defined in the world perspective than the church has been as a spiritual kingdom in the present age. In the Messianic Age, when the kingdom is restored to Israel by the authority of the Father (Acts 1:6, 7), Israel will be first among the nations in the world kingdom of Messiah, and the faithful of the churches will reign with Christ over the nations (Rev. 2:25-29).

The Prophetic Ode of Moses, which contains the first categorical prophecy of the church, affirms a cardinal thesis of Bible prophecy: the ultimate restoration of Israel to her land and her perpetual identity as a chosen people of God. Any interpretation of Bible prophecy which is contrary to the thesis of the Ode of Moses is false. Nothing could be more contrary to the scenario of the Ode of Moses than the teaching that the church has forever replaced Israel as the people of God and that Israel is not to be restored to her Land and to the favor and blessing of God.

Those who have failed to observe the full spectrum of the prophetic significance of the Ode of Moses have also failed to observe that God said that during the days of the Exile, while the people of Israel are "cast far off among the nations" and "scattered among the countries, I will be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come" until the time when "I will even gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Ezek. 11:16, 17). The church, truly "God's people" and a spiritual "Israel" and the kingdom of Christ in the world in the present age, has not supplanted God's people Israel, and from the beginning of the Dispersion, God has been "a sanctuary" for the God-fearing of Israel in "the countries where they have been scattered," for his purpose is to gather them again to the Land and to give them "a new spirit and heart" and to "give them the land of Israel," where "they will be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek. 11:17-20).

The re-gathering of Israel to "the land of Israel. . . the land that I gave to your fathers. . .the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt" will involve the resurrection of the faithful and a new heart and new spirit (Ezek. 37:12-17; 36:24-38; 37:21-28). The re-gathering awaits the coming of Messiah, the great Son of David ("David, my servant"), to reign over Israel (Lk. 1:31-33, Isa. 9:6,7, Jer. 23:5-8).

Contrary to the assumptions of many, the return of a small remnant to the Land after the Babylonian Captivity did not fulfill the great promises of the restoration prophecies and was not attended by nine particular circumstances and developments which will accompany the great Restoration (see *Until*, pp. 81-87). Furthermore, the church is to be God's catalyst to make Israel "jealous," to cause her to seek God earnestly in penitence and faith in preparation for the coming of the Deliverer (Messiah) to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob" and to fulfill all the implications of Israel's irrevocable election, "beloved for the sake of the fathers" (see Rom. 10:19; 11:11-25, 25-33). Obviously, all of this could not have happened until after the church came into existence, long after the return from Babylon.

The little nation Israel today, struggling for existence, is not the promised restoration of Israel, but rather a harbinger of the coming Restoration at the coming of Messiah. Israel's existence as a nation sets the, stage for great prophetic events of the end of the age and the coming of Messiah and his glorious world kingdom. --- *624 King, Mt. Vernon, Mo. 65712*

(The second of three installments of this article will appear in the next issue. You may purchase *Until* by Robert Shank directly from him at the above address for 11.95.)

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INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: AN AMBIGUOUS SIN

In that incessant and loving flow of visitors to 1201 Windsor Dr. in Denton, Texas was a delightful young couple on their way from a family reunion in East Texas. Since they were loyal Church of Christ folk of several generations, I was interested in the goings-on at such reunions, especially when the young man told of how his in-laws love to get together and *sing*. "There are about 50 of them and the home is not all that large," he explained, "so when they sing it is really something else."

"Spiritual songs?," I asked. "All kinds of songs," he said. "Do they use a piano?," I further asked, being a bit nosey. "Oh, yes, they use a piano."

"And these are Church of Christ people?," I inquired. "Yes, most of them, he assured me, "with a sprinkling of Baptists."

"Fifty people is something of a congregation," I noted. "Does it not strike you as strange that if those same 50 people should repair to the nearby church house and sing those same spiritual songs with an instrument that it would be a sin, while to do so at home is all right?" He agreed that it was strange, and he did not know how to handle the apparent contradiction. I did not of course press the point except to add that we should be

able to understand why our Christian Church brethren are puzzled that we consider it all right to sing with an instrument at home but sinful to do so in church.

And it is very common for our people to use the instrument at home when they will not do so at church, though some of our people are consis-tent and will not sing with an instrument even at home.

This leads me to think of instrumental music as *an ambiguous sin.* It is so ambiguous in fact that a large percentage of Church of Christ folk, even if they prefer to be acappella, do not believe it is a sin to use the instrument. It is certain preachers, papers, and professors that keep the issue alive. Most of our people could not care less. They are acappella by habit. Our churches have become great singing churches, many of them, without any need of an instrument. It is our tradition, and, like everybody else, we prefer our traditions. What's wrong with that?

The Church of Christ at Denton, where Ouida and I are members, is an example. The church is now about eight years old and it has never yet sung a hymn with an instrument, but, praise the Lord, how our people do sing! But I have never heard the first word *for* or *against* an instrument all those years. We do not have an instrument because we are a Church of Christ! Because our parents before us did not, and our grandparents. But a sermon in our church against instrumental music (or one for it!) would go over about like a lead balloon. And yet with all the king's horses and all the king's men one could not get an instrument into the Church of Christ at Denton. Tradition!

But we do have a piano! For the day school, that is. And when the kids do specials, even in church, they use the instrument. This is the case with several Churches of Christ, which goes back to J. W. McGarvey, who, as an elder in the old Broadway Christian Church in Lexington would never allow an instrument to be brought in. Except for Sunday School, where he allowed not one but *two* pianos! You see what I mean by ambiguity.

The ambiguity of the sin of instrumental music really came home to me while listening to a tape of an exchange between Joe Schubert (Church of Christ) and Ben Merold (Christian Church) at a recent North American Christian Convention. Joe made it clear that he could not for conscience sake be a member of any church that used the instrument. But when someone asked him if he could sing with an instrument at such places as the NACC, he said he could, for *he was not the one playing the instrument.* Before God, brethren, where then is the sin of instrumental music? Is the sin only in *playing* the instrument, or is it in *singing* with it, or both? Joe Schubert, a dear and good brother and very representative of the Church of Christ, says he can *sing* with an instrument so long as he does not have to *play* the instrument!

This being the case, are we not drawing the line on the wrong folk? We should withdraw fellowship only from all the organists and piano players, not from the great mass of Christians who only sing! But the organists are exonerated, for they only play and do *not* sing! So there is no sin anywhere, after all!

Now don't you think we have been a bit ridiculous about making instrumental music a sin against the God of heaven even when we can't identify the sin?

The tape from the NACC also revealed that a professor at Abilene Christian University (Church of Christ) took the position that an instrument is sinful in that it does not convey the word of God, but that it is all right when the word accompanies it. So he would not object to singing spiritual songs (the word) with the instrument, but only when the instrument plays by itself. We can suppose he would not object to soft background music for his preaching of the word, so long as it stopped when he stopped!

Another professor at ACU has written a book in which he makes a case for acappella music, which is quite different from the usual Church of Christ tract on the sin of instrumental music. But the professor is playing a game (even if not an instrument!), for no case need be made for acappella music since all churches sometimes sing acappella and some of the great choirs of the world are acappella. After all, acappella music did not begin with Churches of Christ. What the professor needs to do is make a case for making instrumental music a sin and for dechristianizing all other Christians who choose to use the instrument, or for the claim that the Church of Christ is the only true church and its members the only true Christians because they are acappella. That is the issue!

But that professor will not attempt any such thing for the simple reason that he doesn't believe such sectarian nonsense.

So, even among ourselves the best that we can do is to make instrumental music an ambiguous sin. Many of our folk might say it would be a sin for them personally, but not necessarily for all others. Others view it as a heinous sin (period), while to still others, perhaps the majority, it is a non-Issue.

No sin in Scripture is *ambiguous.* When God through his word declares something to be a sin it is clearly and distinctly a sin. No ambiguity about the sin of idolatry. No ambiguity about pride being a sin - or greed, drunkenness, adultery, murder. A sin is a breach of what God has clearly enjoined or an omission of what he has distinctly commanded.

Ambiguous sins are only opinions or scruples. While drunkenness is clearly a sin, moderate drinking is not. Extortion is clearly a sin, but gambling is not, for some gamble strictly for amusement and in terms of matches, a coke, or lunch. Adultery is an obvious

sin, but when is petting and dancing a sin? When we move into the ambiguous areas, it depends on circumstances and the people involved. So it is with instrumental music. Rom. 14:5 is the rule: “Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind.”

This distinction should help us in understanding the nature of Christian union. We unite upon what is clearly and distinctly enjoined in Scripture. Disfellowship is to come only in terms of the unambigous sins, and other Christians are never to be excluded on the basis of ambiguous sins, for what is a sin to one person is not necessarily a sin to another.

It should also help us to see that our concern should be with those grievous sins that are offensive to the heart of God and dehumanizing to our fellow human beings, and that we need not make a big deal out of those “sins” that are born of our deductions and propagated by our prejudices.

As for Churches of Christ and instrumental music, it is right for us to be and to remain acappella in our singing, but it is not right for us to demand that other believers do as we do or we will not accept them as fellow Christians. --- *the Editor*

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ARE WE EAGERLY WAITING?

One of our readers, Larry Miles of Norwood, Ohio, dropped us a card recently in which he was commending my history book that he had read. As welcome as the commendation was, there was something else in the brief communication that impressed me more. He began by saying *Greeting in the Blessed Hope,* and closed with *Let us be looking for His coming.* I was impressed that this brother would be all that conscious of the coming of the Lord. Let’s face it, with most of us in Churches of Christ, if not most churches, there is not all that much of an expectation of the second coming of Christ.

Larry is a premillennialist and is associated with those Churches of Christ of the premillennial persuasion, a beautiful cluster of about 125 congregations. Through the years I have had considerable contact with these churches, and I have always been impressed with their continual awareness of “the promise of his coming.” It is only in these churches that I hear prayers of the *Maranatha* (Come, Lord Jesus) variety. Whether in teaching, sermons, or prayers, the typical Church of Christ manifests no particular concern for this cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith.

I am persuaded that Satan has led us away from “the blessed hope” by making us fearful of millennial theories. We have been sold a bill of goods by the old Deceiver himself in that most of our eschatological concern has been to expose the fallacies of

premillennialism. I recall attending a mass gathering of our folk in Dallas, one of Jimmy Allen's big meetings. With thousands gathered in the civic auditorium, Jimmy spent his time declaiming premillennialism. It would have been a good time to have spoken *positively* on "the blessed hope," as set forth by the apostles themselves: "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13)

R. H. Boll, the father of the premill persuasion among our folk, predicted that this neglect of the second coming would occur. As one of the editors of the *Gospel Advocate* in the 1930's he began to write extensively upon prophetic themes, which became very popular with the readers. While he was not factious, he was nonetheless in time very much opposed and even maligned for the positions he held. The premill churches were eventually isolated or "withdrawn from" and premillennialism was made a test of fellowship, not by those who believed the doctrine but by those who opposed it.

Amidst all the furor, brother Boll, always a gentle man (he would not debate the issue with those who opposed him), warned that the opposition toward his teaching would cause the Church of Christ to over-react and thus come to neglect the great doctrine of the second coming, which is the basis of "the blessed hope." For whatever reason, our churches appear to be deprived of the great hope that motivated the early church: "We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope purifies himself, even as he is pure" (1 In. 3:2-3). This is one reason why they prayed in their assemblies, *Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!* (1 Cor. 16:22)

There is one passage about the second coming of our Lord that especially impresses me, causing me to search my own heart: "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb. 9:28). The Greek word (actually three words in one) for *waiting* or *eagerly waiting* indicates earnest expectation, as in Rom. 8:19, or as Thayer suggests, "to wait it out," as if to keep waiting until the expected finally appears.

Do we impress you as people who are "waiting for their master to come" (Lk. 12:36), people eagerly waiting for the Lord? This does not necessarily mean that we look for him momentarily. We might be persuaded by the Scriptures that certain things will happen before he comes, such as the rise of the anti-Christ or the man of sin, or the great tribulation, but still we long for his coming and we "wait it out," whenever it occurs. The risk we take in our carnal minded world, steeped in humanism, is that ideas like the second coming may be among those things we theoretically embrace, but it has no vital application to our daily lives. It should be a part of our constant awareness and expectation that the Christ is not through with this world, that he is coming back to it, to save us who have been waiting it out.

The great truth of Heb. 9:28 should prove helpful to those who suppose the Lord will come *secretly* (the second coming) to rapture the church, then still again (the third coming) a few years afterwards to set up his kingdom. Whatever may be said of a future kingdom on this earth, the Scriptures do not teach that Jesus will come secretly to furtively steal away his disciples from an unsuspecting world. I recall one sister's story of how she feared her husband had been raptured when she saw his house slippers beside his chair at the breakfast table, leaving her behind, when he had only gone to the toilet. Others warn us that their car might suddenly be unmanned on the highway, leaving us to wonder what happened to the driver. Indeed, we are told that the missing persons bureau will be swamped with calls inquiring about those that have been raptured by a secret coming of Jesus. This theory, rather popular these days in fundamentalist circles, is sometimes called pretribulationism or dispensationalism.

But Heb. 9:28 refers to the *second* coming as if that is it. Jesus is not to come again and again, and besides we are assured that when he comes every eye will see him (Rev. 1:7) and that it will be with a cry and the sound of the trumpet of God. (1 Thess. 4:16). It will hardly be secret. When he comes the world will know it all too well. Rev. 1:7 assures us that even those that crucified him will be among those that see him coming in the clouds, and Matt. 24:27 tells us that his coming will be "as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west." We agree with one commentator who concludes from this passage that "The whole world will see him in the brilliance of his heavenly glory" (Lenski).

That same Matt. 24 teaches us that we are to hasten the Lord's coming by evangelizing the world. Verse 14 reads: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come." There we have *the sign* of his coming. Once the church has preached the gospel to all the world, then the Lord will come. If we conclude that the church cannot do this until the Lord's prayer for its unity has been realized, then it is apparent that we have our job cut out for us. It is certainly no time for lethargy.

However the timetable may be, we can all heed the words of the apostle: "Gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13). --- *the Editor*

> An open mind is all very well in its way, but it ought not to be so open that there is no keeping anything in or out of it. It should be capable of shutting its doors sometimes, or it may be found a little draughty. --- *Samuel Butler*

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BOOK NOTES

If you love the beauty of the King James Bible and yet dislike its antiquated style, then you should have the very impressive *The New King James Version*, which preserves the elegance of the old but eliminates the thee's and thou's. Rather than Paul saying, "I am verily a man which am a Jew" the new KJV reads, "I am a Jew," and words that have changed their meaning have been corrected such as *precede* for *prevent* in I Thess. 4:15 and *conduct* for *conversation* such as in Gal. 1:13. It may go too far when it has "Your kingdom come. Your will be done," and even the Psalms have no thee's and thou's, but still it is the King James, somewhat dressed up in modernity, even if it does have the words of Jesus in red. It is a handsome, buckram, durable edition, and we can send you one for only 12.95 postpaid, and this is the entire Bible.

William Barclay readers will be glad to have his translation of the New Testament, along with a short introduction to each book. He is good at such things as the use of the Greek tenses in such places as: "Keep on asking, and you will get; keep on seeking, and you will find." For "Seek first the kingdom of God, etc." he has "Make the Kingdom of God, and life in loyalty to him, the object of all your endeavour, and you will get all these other things as well." 3 .50 postpaid.

We have a few copies of Walter Kaufmann's *Critique of Religion and Philosophy,* now in soft cover, at 5.95. *Theology Today* said that a Christian should take this book to a quiet place and have dialogue with it, and it will surely make him a better Christian. It is especially for those who would dip somewhat into philosophy.

A concordance is a must for serious Bible study. We can make you a good deal on the handy edition of *Cruden's Concordance,* which is an excellent listing of all the significant words of the entire Bible. 7.50 postpaid.

We can still supply several books that have been popular with our readers: *Interpreting Revelation* by Merrill Tenney, a highly readable treatment of the last book of the Bible, 8.95; *The Mormon Papers* by Harry L. Ropp, which gets to the taproot of the Mormon illusion, its "Bibles," 4.50; Harry R. Boer's *A Short History of the Early Church*, an excellent brief survey, 5.50.

Among the new books is *Liberating the Church* by Howard Snyder, who has in several books brought the modern church to judgment in terms of its mission in this world. The book calls the church to be in Kingdom business more than in church business. 6.95

postpaid. Another new book is *Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope* by Ronald Sider and Richard Taylor gives the reader the facts of an imaginary nuclear attack on Moscow, and goes on to challenge the believer the terrifying consequences of a nuclear war for all, along with a look at deterrence and the realistic possibility of its failure. 6.95 postpaid.

And all who love to read John R. W. Stott will welcome *God's Book For God's People,* which shows one how to glorify God through a proper use of the Bible, all in just 96 pages. 3.50 postpaid.

We have three bound volumes of this journal yet available, covering four years of publication, each featuring a special theme. *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977) and *The Ancient Order* (1978) are 5.50 each, while *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* and *With All the Mind*, a double volume for 1979-80, is 8.50. These are indexed, beautifully hand bound, gold stamped, with dust cover, and the price is barely more than the usual sub rate.

We have a thick folder full of reactions from the rank and file to *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches* and we may share some of these with you. A reader in Nashville, to select one at random, wrote after reading the book: "I appreciate your treatment of the leaders of the movement with respect and dignity, acknowledging their dedication to God and his word, yet without apology showing how they, as we all, come short of living out the greatest commandment of loving God and our neighbor." If you do not have your copy, we will put one in the mail to you the same day your check for 21.95 arrives, postpaid.

While 21.95 is a modest price for a hardbound book of over 700 pages, we realize that is still a lot of money to some of our readers who might want a copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement.* For the benefit of such ones we will send each one a free copy of the book if he or she will go to the trouble of rounding up just 8 subs to this journal at 3.00 each. Send us the 8 names and 24.00 and tell us that you want the book and it will be yours.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I wrote Carl Ketcherside to ask his permission to use the story of his life-changing experience as related in the October 1978 issue of *Restoration Review.* He has given permission, but I want to be sure that it is all right with you too. I know you are not

copyrighted, but it is your magazine. I am planning an issue of *Mission* on experimental dimensions of faith, religion, the Christian life - the personal narrative as a source of encouragement, insight, and inspiration. ---*Bobbie Lee Holley, editor, Mission Journal*

(It looks as if some good things are in store for the readers of *Mission.* The sub rate is 10.00 per annum and the address is 1508 Ephesus Church Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514. --- *Ed.*)

Your paper is like a breath of fresh air that blows through our world of legalism. The doctrine of salvation by works is a frightful thing. Praise the Lord that many are beginning to read and study the Bible and see the fallacy of this concept. I have been a "member of the Church of Christ" for 30 years but found Christ only two years ago. What a blessed relief. Salvation by grace has set me free! --- *Paul Johnson, Austin, Tx.*

Don't you dare leave me off. I love *Restoration Review.* It gives me joy to know we are going forward and not backward. Hang in there! - *Mrs. Owen Marlow, Carbondale, Il.*

Recently the Church of Christ in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio sponsored a Restoration Seminar at the University of Akron. The featured speakers were Reuel Lemmons (Church of Christ) and Bob Fife (Christian Church). It was noteworthy. I am sending you tapes on what was said. - *Jack Wallace,* 1113 *Buckingham, Sandusky, OH 44870*

(If you are interested in hearing these tapes, you might write to Jack and get your name on the list. --- *Ed.)*

I want to tell you how much I'm enjoying your history of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Not only is it a most fascinating story, but you have done an outstandingly surprising job of writing and compiling it! It is really thrilling to find so many little-known anecdotes about those forerunners of ours. You should have an advertising agent who could tell what a fine publication this book really is. To paraphrase the queen in her evaluation of Solomon, the half has not been told! --- *William H. Hall, Snow Shoe, Pa.*

I'm so glad that saving faith doesn't require some profound theological knowledge or even an expert understanding of things Biblical. In addition to those in the great faith chapter, I also remember the thief on the cross, Thomas, and even Peter. - *Janet Slinkard, Vandalia, Oh.*

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Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, TX 76201*

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly, except July and August, at 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas. Second class postage paid at Denton, Texas.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: $5.00 a year, or two years for $8.00; in clubs of four or more (mailed by us to separate addresses) $3.00 per name per year. (USPS 044450).
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RESTORATION REVIEW, *1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201.